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April 20, 2006   517-373-6920

Governor signs Sen. Kuipers' high school graduation requirements

LANSING — Legislation that creates rigorous high school graduation requirements that ensure Michigan schoolchildren will be prepared for the 21st century economy was signed into law today.

Sen. Wayne Kuipers, R-Holland, who led the effort for the graduation standards in the Senate, praised the governor's signature today during a ceremony held at a Lansing middle school. The challenging statewide standards make Michigan a national leader in demanding students leave high school only after taking a certain amount of credits in various subjects as well as specific courses, such as algebra.

"If we want our children to win the jobs of tomorrow, they have to have the knowledge that tomorrow's workforce demands," Kuipers said. "With these requirements in place, Michigan is a national leader in expecting more from graduating seniors instead of bringing up the rear."

As chairman of the Senate Education Committee, Kuipers convened more than a dozen hearings throughout the state to hear from parents and local educators about the graduation requirements proposal. The Legislature took up the proposal for graduation requirements after the state superintendent of instruction and the State Board of Education recommended the changes.

Students entering eighth grade in August are the first class that will face the more-rigorous requirements. Previously, the only statewide graduation requirement seniors faced was one semester of civics.

At the ceremony, the governor signed Senate Bill 1124, which was sponsored by Kuipers, and companion legislation sponsored by Rep. Brian Palmer, R-Romeo. SB 1124 is now Public Act 124 of 2006.

To download a photograph of the event, visit Sen. Kuipers photo Web page, located at www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/photowire/Kuipers/Kuipers.htm.